

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, July 12, 2000, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to be here to see so many Haiti experts on the floor including, my good friend the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN), both of whom I have traveled there with many times.

I propose that we strike the language because it creates a double standard against Haiti and it, further, is premature.

What the language does that I am objecting to is ask that the Committee on Appropriations get a report from the Secretary of State to say that Haiti has held free and fair elections to seat a new parliament and, secondly, that the Office of National Drug Policy should determine that the Government of Haiti is fully cooperating with the United States to interdict drug traffic through Haiti.

Now, let us take the second one first. Nobody in the Caribbean cooperates with the U.S. drug interdiction policy interfering with transshipments of drugs that go on throughout the Caribbean more than Haiti. It gives our Government total full operating license. And, in addition, I have heard our Coast Guard say that they have total cooperation.

Further, the Haitian Government has no navy, so they are anxious to have the continued support of the U.S.

Now, with the idea of holding up appropriations until the Secretary of State declares free elections, just a couple of things we need to understand. This is a double standard that does not apply to anybody else. And we have had far more seriously defective elections than Haiti.

Haiti had a great election. We admitted it. I was an international observer. It was reported in the paper. Record turn out. Record registration. Non-violence at the election. There was only one problem. There was a disagreement about the counting methodology after the election.

Now, how does that qualify for considering fraud? There was an honest disagreement of the counting process which our own State Department, the White House says can be resolved and is in the process of being resolved.

So lighten up. Let us give Haiti a chance. There is absolutely no reason for us to do that.

Now, the other reason is that we are sending in Federal observers for U.S. elections 200 years after this country. They have to come into Flint, Michigan, and many places throughout the country to protect the voters and their right to vote and to make sure that there is no fraud. So we do not want to

apply the standards of the U.S. to our country.

Furthermore, Peru had elections that closed out international observers. Those of us who went as international observers were able to see with our own eyes the fairness and the appropriateness of the election.

So let us let the Haitian Government, the election commission of Haiti, do its job before we start issuing these extremely punitive activities.

Now, remember what we did for Peru was prospective. After they had a not-so-good election, we said in the future they have got to do this and that. So please, to the chairman of this committee and the subcommittee chairman, let us give them a break.

Our Government is in the process of negotiating as we speak. A U.S. delegation is on the way to Haiti, I think they left last night, to work it out with the Government; and here we are calling the shots as if we know what is going to go down.

Let us give Haiti, the newest developing democratic nation in the western hemisphere, a small chance by striking this amendment.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, while I fully concur with the concerns voiced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and we want to do all we can to assist those in need in Haiti and promote democracy in that country, regrettably there are serious concerns about democratic institutions in Haiti today and our Nation needs to uphold those principles.

For these reasons, I will oppose the amendment. But our committee will continue to monitor events, as we have with the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) in the past, of what is going on in Haiti to see what we can do to strengthen democratic institutions in that country.

Democracy is an important and paramount interest to all of us, and we would like to see Haiti move in the right direction. But I urge our colleagues to oppose the amendment.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 10 seconds to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, all I am suggesting, we are in agreement we want to move Haiti forward, but we should not be acting punitively before the election results are resolved. That is all I am saying is let us wait.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 15 seconds to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Chairman, I thank the distinguished chairman for his courtesy.

Mr. Chairman, I support what the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is setting out to do. I want to follow up on what the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations said, these are principles we want to uphold. And surely we do. But it seems unfair for us to single out Haiti.

If they want to write this to apply to every country, that is one thing, but it really seems kind of unfair to single out Haiti in this report. So holding the principles, we should apply them consistently.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS).

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, I obviously heard this debate and ran over here. I very much am opposed to the amendment. There is no pretense democracy anymore in Haiti. It is not a democratic country.

I have recently had the opportunity to talk to Mr. Manus, who was the head of the election committee there. He was chased out of the country under threat of death under assassination by mob violence, a most brutal and terrifying prospect. And certainly he has come to our country seeking asylum as a result.

There is no judicial department that is working there. There is no real legislative branch. We are stuck with a situation in Haiti where we have committed billions of dollars and made the situation worse because we have backed the wrong people.

It is a tragic situation. To make it worse by adding more American taxpayers' dollars to the situation to promote a non-democratic form of government in a friendly neighboring country to me is an unconscionable act, and I surely hope we are not going to do that.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOSS. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) and I have been to Haiti together. We know there is no military in Haiti. At our insistence, they have only a national police force and no navy. We have met with the President of Haiti. The government is working as well as they can. The election will bring the parliament back to action.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, the election has been, by all observation, a total sham. The OAS has come back and said this is not even a pretense of democracy. There is no transparency.

The final blow for me, and I have been giving them the benefit of the doubt for a long time, as the gentleman knows, hoping against hope that things will get better, but when I spoke with Mr. Manus, that was the end of it. It is over.